

# WILEY



## Review

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from Saturday at none forto Monday." A pond existed, "i-closed aboute with a wal of tyle and of stoon. In that pond men wascheth and batheth wel ofte ; and everiche man feleth the water hoote or colde, right as he wolde hymself." But besides telling us of these wonders, Higden shows a keen observation of the physical and social characteristics of the British Isles.

A striking description is given of the linguistic difficulties of the time. In addition to the three dialects Englishmen had originally to cope with—inherited from their ancestors, "the thre manere peple of Germania"—the language had become mixed with Danish and Norman French and was much impaired, we are told ; "and som useth straunge wlafferynge, chiterynge, harrynge, and garrynge grisbayting," a sentence which lends some colour to the statement. Of the manners and doings of the countries of "Engelond"—as topographically diverse and strange to each other as were formerly those of the citizens of north and south Italy—there is much criticism that is trenchant and amusing.

Particularly interesting, geographically, is the section on "Wayfaring and Foreign Travel," with extracts illustrating the subject on many sides, from Trevisa's description of the helplessness of a blind man on the road, to Fitzstephen's account of the pomp of his master Becket's missions in France. Much curious detail is given of the cost of travel, the food, the routes and the like ; while the dangers and wonders encountered by travellers show England of the Middle Ages to have been a stranger place than Tibet or Central Africa of to-day.

**An Old Gate of England: Rye, Romney Marsh, and the Western Cinque Ports.**—A. G. Bradley. London: Robert Scott. 1918. *With Illustrations by Marian E. G. Bradley.* 6s. net.

Mr. Bradley has written another of his entertaining topographical books, this time about Rye and the surrounding country, of which he shows a knowledge that could only result from long acquaintance and real affection. "Rye," he says, "is unique. There is no doubt whatever about that. The better you know your England the more obvious becomes this simple fact." Naturally the book is not merely descriptive, but contains much historical reminiscence, and Mr. Bradley's account of the part played by Rye and the surrounding towns in the days when the Cinque Ports were at the height of their prosperity, is written with a dry humour that succeeds in bringing their rather truculent burghers and sailors very near to us. Especially delightful are the descriptions of the "long green sweep of the Marsh, with all its shifting lights," in this corner of the "old, old England." Every village and church, almost every old house, becomes for the reader alive with tales and histories, not so much of the nobility as of the common village folk. After dealing fully—both geographically and historically—with Rye and Winchelsea, the country and its villages between Winchelsea and Hastings is thoroughly explored. Then, by way of the steep road out of Hastings over Fairlight, the author takes us through the outlying villages to Brede and Northiam ; from Northiam we return through Wittersham, Iden, and Playden to Rye. From Rye we start out again northwards to Brookland and Lydd, and across the Romney Marsh to Dymchurch and Lymepe. The text is supplemented by excellent pen and ink sketches by Marian Bradley, and the book is to be recommended both to those who know and those who do not know Rye.